

CHAPTER III: MARITAL STATUS

1. Proportion by Marital Status

Proportion of never-married men and that of widowed women are high.

According to the population aged 15 and over (53.2 million men and 57.1 million women) by marital status as reported in the 2010 Population Census, the number of never-married men is 16.6 million and that of never-married women is 13.1 million. The proportion of never-married men to the population of men aged 15 and over (31.9%) is higher than that of never-married women to the population of women aged 15 and over (23.3%). This is mainly because the age at which men get married for the first time is generally higher than that of women, leading to a large proportion of never-married younger men.

Meanwhile, the number of widowed men is 1.6 million and that of widowed women is 7.8 million. The proportion of widowed men to the population of men aged 15 and over (3.1%) is lower than that of widowed women to the population of women aged 15 and over (13.9%). This is mainly because the age of the wife is generally lower than the age of the husband and the life expectancy of women is higher than that of men. (Figure 3.1, Tables 3.1 and 3.2)

Figure 3.1 Proportion of Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex and Marital Status: 2010

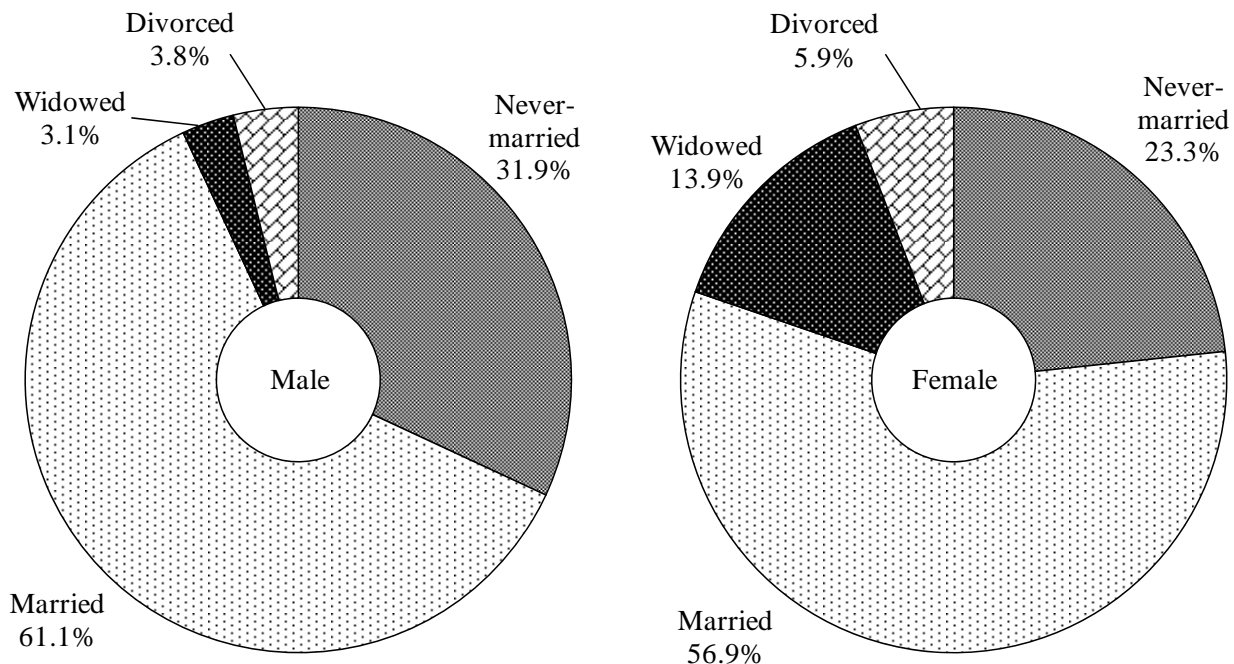


Table 3.1 Population by Sex and Marital Status: 2005 to 2010

Sex and marital status	Population (thousands)		Proportion (%)	
	2010	2005	2010	2005
Both sexes	110,277	109,764	100.0	100.0
Never-married	29,730	29,833	27.5	27.5
Married	63,786	64,583	58.9	59.6
Widowed	9,409	9,176	8.7	8.5
Divorced	5,283	4,701	4.9	4.3
Not reported	2,071	1,472	-	-
Male	53,155	53,086	100.0	100.0
Never-married	16,639	16,686	31.9	32.0
Married	31,859	32,260	61.1	61.8
Widowed	1,608	1,515	3.1	2.9
Divorced	1,999	1,744	3.8	3.3
Not reported	1,049	880	-	-
Female	57,123	56,679	100.0	100.0
Never-married	13,090	13,147	23.3	23.4
Married	31,927	32,323	56.9	57.6
Widowed	7,801	7,660	13.9	13.7
Divorced	3,283	2,957	5.9	5.3
Not reported	1,022	592	-	-

Table 3.2 Trends in Mean Age at Marriages and in Age Differences between Husbands and Wives: 1975 to 2010 (Age)

Year	All marriages		First marriages		Age difference	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	All marriages	First marriages
1975	27.8	25.2	27.0	24.7	2.6	2.3
1980	28.7	25.9	27.8	25.2	2.8	2.6
1985	29.3	26.4	28.2	25.5	2.9	2.7
1990	29.7	26.9	28.4	25.9	2.8	2.5
1995	29.8	27.3	28.5	26.3	2.5	2.2
2000	30.4	28.2	28.8	27.0	2.2	1.8
2005	31.7	29.4	29.8	28.0	2.3	1.8
2006	32.0	29.6	30.0	28.2	2.4	1.8
2007	32.1	29.8	30.1	28.3	2.3	1.8
2008	32.2	29.9	30.2	28.5	2.3	1.8
2009	32.4	30.1	30.4	28.6	2.3	1.8
2010	32.5	30.3	30.5	28.8	2.2	1.7

Source: "Vital Statistics", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Proportion of divorced population and that of never-married population are increasing which are standardized for age composition of 2010.

The trends in the proportion of the population aged 15 and over by marital status show that in both men and women, the proportion of never-married population started declining in 2000 and from 1985 onward so did that of married population. On the other hand, the proportion of widowed population had leveled off or slightly declined before 1990, but started rising in 1995. The proportion of divorced population showed little fluctuation until 1975, but started rising in 1980 in both men and women as a result of an increase in divorce cases in recent years.

The trends are influenced by changes in age composition in each year. To exclude these influences, the data for marital status is standardized for age composition of 2010. This standardization is based on the assumption that the age composition of the population of Japan for each year is the same as that of 2010. According to the standardized data for marital status, both men and women, the proportion of the never-married population and that of the divorced population show an upward trend, while that of the widowed population shows a downward trend. (Figure 3.2, Tables 3.3 and 3.4)

Figure 3.2 Trends in the Proportion of Never-Married Population by Sex: 1950 to 2010

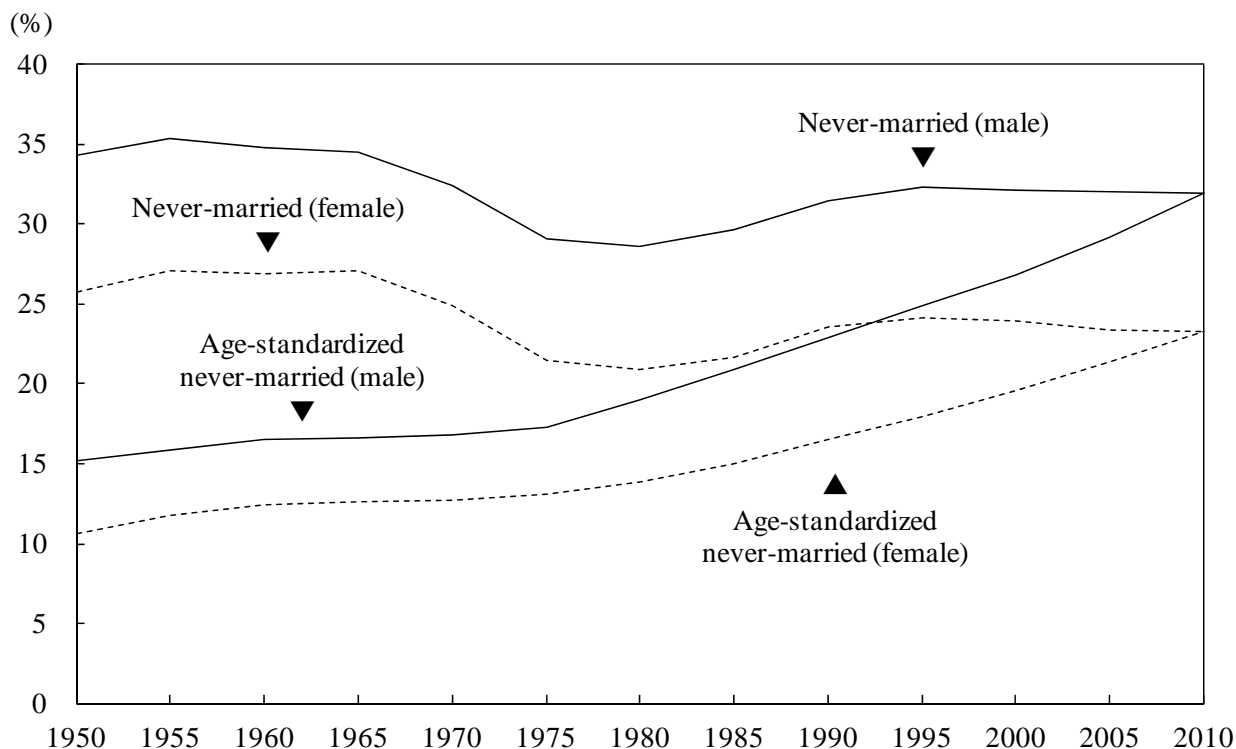


Table 3.3 Trends in the Proportion of the Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex and Marital Status: 1950 to 2010 (%)

Sex and year	Proportion by marital status				Proportion by marital status after age-standardization			
	Never-married	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Never-married	Married	Widowed	Divorced
Male								
1950	34.3	60.3	4.6	0.9	15.2	71.4	12.4	1.0
1955	35.3	59.7	4.1	0.9	15.9	71.5	11.5	1.1
1960	34.8	60.8	3.5	0.9	16.5	72.2	10.1	1.2
1965	34.5	61.7	3.0	0.8	16.6	73.5	8.8	1.0
1970	32.4	64.1	2.7	0.8	16.8	74.5	7.6	1.1
1975	29.1	67.4	2.6	0.9	17.3	74.9	6.7	1.1
1980	28.6	67.8	2.4	1.2	19.0	74.0	5.7	1.3
1985	29.6	66.3	2.4	1.6	20.9	72.3	5.0	1.7
1990	31.4	64.3	2.4	1.9	22.9	70.8	4.4	1.9
1995	32.3	63.0	2.5	2.2	24.9	68.8	4.0	2.3
2000	32.1	62.5	2.7	2.7	26.8	66.7	3.7	2.8
2005	32.0	61.8	2.9	3.3	29.2	64.0	3.4	3.4
2010	31.9	61.1	3.1	3.8	31.9	61.1	3.1	3.8
Female								
1950	25.7	56.2	16.1	1.9	10.6	51.9	35.6	1.9
1955	27.1	55.7	15.2	2.0	11.8	51.9	34.4	2.0
1960	26.9	56.8	14.2	2.1	12.4	52.9	32.4	2.3
1965	27.1	57.9	13.1	1.9	12.6	54.6	30.7	2.1
1970	24.9	60.2	12.8	2.1	12.7	55.9	29.1	2.3
1975	21.5	63.7	12.7	2.1	13.1	57.5	27.2	2.2
1980	20.9	64.2	12.4	2.5	13.9	58.6	24.9	2.6
1985	21.7	62.6	12.7	3.0	15.0	58.9	23.1	3.0
1990	23.6	60.7	12.4	3.3	16.5	59.5	20.7	3.3
1995	24.1	59.4	12.8	3.7	18.0	59.2	19.1	3.7
2000	23.9	58.7	13.1	4.4	19.6	58.7	17.2	4.4
2005	23.4	57.6	13.7	5.3	21.4	57.7	15.5	5.3
2010	23.3	56.9	13.9	5.9	23.3	56.9	13.9	5.9

Note: The calculation for the standardization was conducted by considering the nationwide population aged 15 and over by sex and age (five-year groups) as of 2010 to be standard population. In short, the purpose of calculation is to observe how the proportions by marital status would change if the age composition of the population aged 15 and over is assumed to be identical to that of 2010.

Table 3.4 Trends in the Number of Marriages and Divorces: 1950 to 2010 (thousands)

Item	1950	1960	1970	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Number of marriages	715	866	1,029	775	736	722	792	798	714	700
Number of divorces	84	69	96	142	167	158	199	264	262	251

Source: "Vital Statistics", Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

2. Proportion of Married Population by Age Group

The highest proportion of married men and women is found in the 70 to 74 and 55 to 59 age groups respectively.

Observing the proportion of married population by age group, it shows that the highest proportion among men is 84.8% (aged 70 to 74), and the highest proportion among women is 79.1% (aged 55 to 59). This is because among the younger population is the proportion of unmarried people is large. On the other hand, the proportion of widowed population grows quickly among the aged 70 and over. (Figure 3.3, Table 3.5)

The proportions of married population around age group 40 to 44 are declining.

When comparing the married population by age group in 2005 with 2010, two trends appear: the married population around age group 40 to 44 is declining in both men and women while the never-married population is increasing.

Among men, the proportion dropped 3 percentage points (pp) or more in each age group between 35 to 69. For example, the proportion married men aged 40 to 44 decreased 6.0 percentage points from 72.4% in 2005 to 66.4% in 2010, while among men aged 45 to 49 the decrease was 5.4 pp from 76.7% in 2005 to 71.3% in 2010, and so on. Among women, the proportion dropped 3 pp or more in each age group between 35 to 49. For example, the proportion married women aged 40 to 44 decreased 5.5 pp from 78.7% in 2005 to 73.2% in 2010, while among women aged 35 to 39 the decrease was 4.0 pp from 73.8% in 2005 to 69.8% in 2010. (Figure 3.3, Table 3.5)

Figure 3.3 Proportion of the Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex, Age (Five-Year Groups) and Marital Status: 2005 to 2010

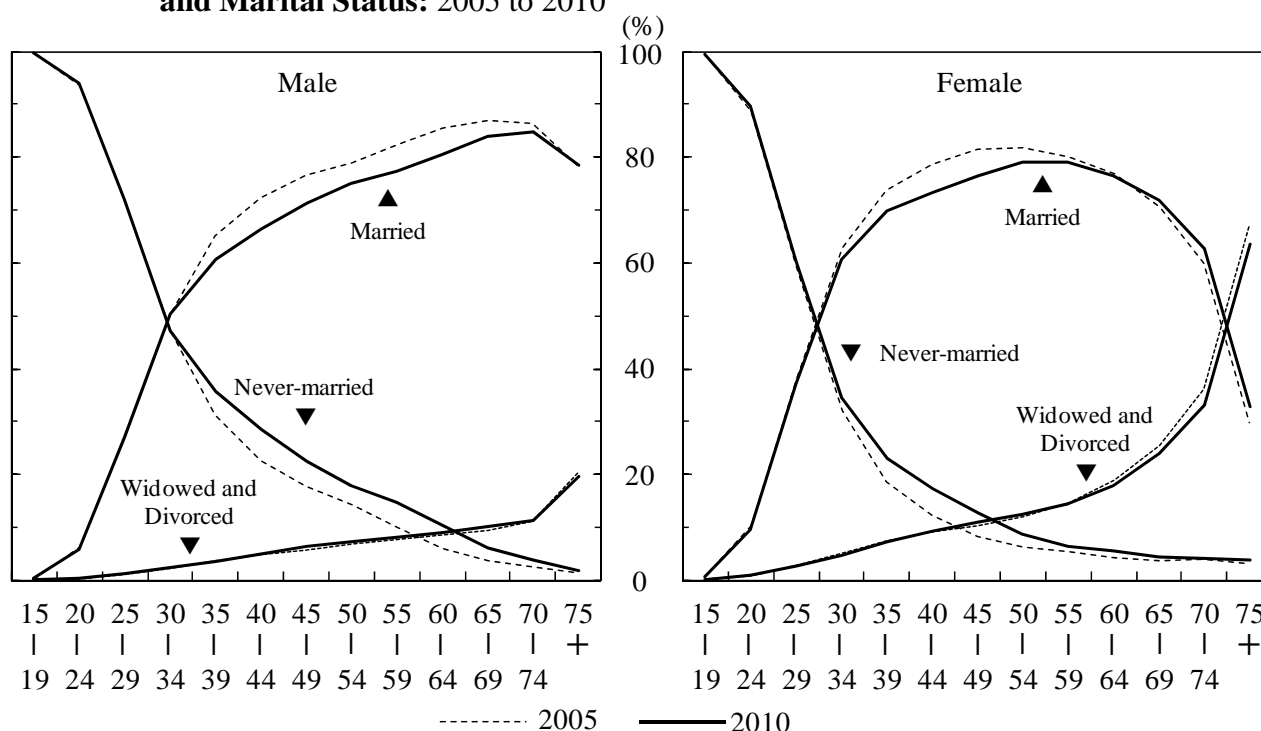


Table 3.5 Trends in the Proportion of the Population Aged 15 and Over by Sex, Age (Five-Year Groups) and Marital Status: 2000 to 2010

(%)

Sex and age	Never-married			Married			Widowed			Divorced		
	2000	2005	2010	2000	2005	2010	2000	2005	2010	2000	2005	2010
Male	32.1	32.0	31.9	62.5	61.8	61.1	2.7	2.9	3.1	2.7	3.3	3.8
15-19 years old	99.5	99.6	99.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
20-24	92.9	93.5	94.0	6.8	6.2	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.3
25-29	69.4	71.4	71.8	29.6	27.4	27.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.1	1.1
30-34	42.9	47.1	47.3	55.0	50.6	50.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.0	2.2	2.2
35-39	26.2	31.2	35.6	70.6	65.1	60.8	0.2	0.1	0.1	3.0	3.6	3.4
40-44	18.7	22.7	28.6	77.3	72.4	66.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	3.7	4.6	4.8
45-49	14.8	17.6	22.5	80.1	76.7	71.3	0.7	0.5	0.5	4.4	5.2	5.8
50-54	10.3	14.4	17.8	83.5	78.9	75.1	1.2	1.1	0.9	5.0	5.6	6.3
55-59	6.1	10.1	14.7	86.9	82.3	77.3	2.2	1.9	1.7	4.8	5.8	6.4
60-64	3.9	5.9	10.3	88.5	85.6	80.5	3.6	3.3	2.8	4.1	5.2	6.3
65-69	2.6	3.8	6.1	88.6	86.9	83.9	5.7	5.1	4.7	3.1	4.2	5.4
70-74	1.7	2.4	3.8	87.3	86.5	84.8	8.8	8.0	7.2	2.2	3.0	4.2
75 and over	1.0	1.3	1.9	77.4	78.4	78.5	20.2	18.6	17.6	1.3	1.6	2.1
Female	23.9	23.4	23.3	58.7	57.6	56.9	13.1	13.7	13.9	4.4	5.3	5.9
15-19 years old	99.1	99.2	99.4	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
20-24	88.0	88.7	89.6	11.3	10.4	9.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.9	0.8
25-29	54.0	59.1	60.3	43.5	38.2	37.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.4	2.6	2.5
30-34	26.6	32.0	34.5	69.0	62.8	60.8	0.2	0.2	0.2	4.2	5.0	4.5
35-39	13.9	18.7	23.1	79.9	73.8	69.8	0.6	0.5	0.4	5.6	7.0	6.8
40-44	8.6	12.2	17.4	83.9	78.7	73.2	1.2	1.0	0.8	6.3	8.1	8.6
45-49	6.3	8.3	12.6	84.3	81.5	76.4	2.3	2.0	1.6	7.0	8.2	9.5
50-54	5.3	6.2	8.7	83.0	81.8	79.0	4.3	3.7	3.1	7.4	8.2	9.2
55-59	4.3	5.3	6.5	81.1	80.1	79.1	8.2	6.5	5.6	6.5	8.1	8.8
60-64	3.9	4.3	5.5	76.4	77.0	76.6	14.4	12.0	9.6	5.3	6.8	8.4
65-69	4.0	3.8	4.5	68.5	70.5	71.8	23.2	20.3	17.0	4.3	5.3	6.8
70-74	4.0	3.9	4.0	56.8	60.1	62.8	35.3	31.8	27.9	3.9	4.2	5.2
75 and over	2.5	3.2	3.7	25.8	29.7	32.8	68.8	63.9	60.1	2.8	3.2	3.5